



POLITICAL SCIENCE 415

## SENIOR SEMINAR, PART I: Science, a Review, & a Plan

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Monmouth College, Fall 2015  
Tuesdays 3:00-4:30 p.m.  
CSB 287

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### Professor Nathan P. Kalmoe

Office: CSB 332

Office hours: Monday through Friday 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., and by appointment

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### Course Description & Objectives

The senior seminar represents a capstone experience for Political Science majors, pulling together much of what you have learned and applying skills you have honed over the past three years. This is a year-long course worth half a credit each semester. I'll be sure to keep your workload appropriate for a half-credit class. By the end you'll produce a 25-30 page research paper. That's daunting, but we'll work through it step by step.

The goals in Fall including picking a research topic, writing a research plan, and completing a literature review on your chosen topic. You'll also learn basic elements of political science research and practice skill-building exercises.

The Spring semester is devoted to writing and presenting your paper. You will send a research abstract to the Illinois State University undergraduate Political Science conference. If your proposal is accepted, you will travel with the rest of the class to present the paper at ISU in April. In addition, all of you will present your findings at Scholars' Day on campus. I'll meet with you individually to track your progress throughout the semester. We'll occasionally convene for practice presentations and writing feedback, but we will not meet regularly as a class.

As you work on your research project, I will be working on one too, so we'll be working in tandem!

This will be a challenging course: writing a major research paper is hard work, and you'll be learning new skills and ways of thinking for it. The reward will be more than a degree in political science and more than just a better understanding of the political world. You'll have skills and a set of analytical lenses that you can apply and build on as a professional and as a citizen engaged in the political world.

### Required Reading

There is a small amount of reading for class: ~20 pages per week. You won't succeed without carefully reading it.

There are no books. Required readings will have web links on our webpage, and you'll find 15 more for your project.

**Optional Text:** Babbie. (2011). *The Basics of Social Research*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition (on Library reserve)

**Class Resources:** Lecture slides, readings, your notes, fellow students, me  
(<https://nkalmoe.wordpress.com/senior-seminar-part-1/>)

**Current Political Science Research:** I recommend reading political science blogs for ideas and leads for lit review.

All Political Science:	Monkey Cage	<a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/">http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/</a>
U.S. Political Parties:	Mischief of Faction	<a href="http://www.mischiefsoffaction.com/">http://www.mischiefsoffaction.com/</a>
U.S. Survey Research:	Pollster	<a href="http://www.pollster.com/">http://www.pollster.com/</a>
International Relations:	Duck of Minerva	<a href="http://duckofminerva.com/">http://duckofminerva.com/</a>
Law & Legal Studies:	Empirical Legal Studies	<a href="http://www.elsblog.org/">http://www.elsblog.org/</a>
Political Economy:	Chris Blattman	<a href="http://chrisblattman.com/">http://chrisblattman.com/</a>

## **Requirements**

Your overall course grade will be determined by the following:

Attendance	5%
Participation	10%
Assignments	15%
Research Plan	20%
Literature Review	30%
Quizzes (8)	20%

### **ATTENDANCE (5%)**

You should attend every class, and I will take attendance. Excused absences: provide me **with documentation** and notification **in advance for university-sanctioned events**, or as soon as possible for illness or family emergency. Religious holidays are excused **with prior notification**. **Missing class is -5 points.**

Punctuality is crucial. **Being late is -3 points** and may prevent you from taking a quiz that day. Arriving after 30 minutes will be absent. You may take **one unexcused absence** without penalty, excluding exam days.

### **PARTICIPATION (10%)**

Your participation grade requires respectful engagement in class discussions and activities. In the spring, this will include presenting your research project. I expect you to read all required readings and to come to class ready to discuss the material. Class sessions will involve a mixture of lecture, activities, and discussion.

Please **ask questions**, challenge assumptions, and politely disagree with your classmates or me. Remember to listen to and reflect on everyone's contributions. Be respectful in your peer feedback. I'm interested in hearing how your life experiences and knowledge intersect with topics we're in class. Please share your perspectives!

### **4 ASSIGNMENTS (15%)**

We'll have four short 1-page assignments to help move your project along and practice research skills: research topics, research questions, annotated bibliography, & literature summary practice. Late: minus 10 percent per day.

### **4-PAGE RESEARCH PLAN (20%)**

3 pages on your research question, why it's important, and the methods & data you plan to use to answer it. Also, provide a preliminary list of 15 scholarly articles that directly address your research question, with one-sentence annotations on how each relates to your question. Instructions will be posted on the class webpage. Late: minus 10 percent per day.

### **8-10 PAGE LITERATURE REVIEW (30%)**

Summarize the theories and findings from 15 scholarly sources (articles are easier but books are OK). Look for a few review articles that cover a lot of ground on your topic. At the end, state your hypothesis based on the literature or explain why you expect to find something else. Detailed instructions on class webpage. **MUST BE ON TIME! Or Zero.**

As long as your contributions meet modest standards (please proofread & spell-check!), I will not base evaluations on eloquence of writing or speaking. I *will* evaluate them on evidence that you completed **all** of the readings, as well as evidence that you reflected critically upon them, the quality of those reflections, and adherence to instructions.

### **8 READING QUIZZES (20%)**

To keep you accountable for assigned readings, we will have **8 short quizzes** throughout the semester. Each will cover readings for that day plus lecture material and readings since the previous quiz. Quizzes are at the start of class.

If a quiz is given when you are excused (or if it's your one free absence) it is not counted against you and will not be made up. **Lowest quiz score is dropped.** Your overall quiz score average all of your counted quizzes. **Missed quizzes** that are neither excused nor your one unexcused absence will be **scored zero.**

**Course Time Expectations:** (hours may vary week to week)

In class activities (14 weeks of classes + final exam)	1.5 hours/week
Assigned reading & class prep	1 hour/week
Paper Preparation (reading, lit review, research plan)	2 hours/week
4 Assignments	0.5 hours/week
Quiz preparation	0.5 hours/week
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.5 hours/week</b>

**Grading**

Grade scale: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (<60). A's are reserved for excellent and exceptional work, B's suggest your work is very good, C's range are for satisfactory work.

I am a resource for you, along with your classmates. **If you have questions** about reading material, lecture content, quizzes, quizzes, or exams, I encourage you to **talk with other students, come to office hours, and/or make an appointment with me.** I will respond to emails within 24 hours, but usually much sooner. **Please include “Senior Seminar” in the subject line so I can prioritize your email.** This class will challenge you, but I will help you meet it.

**In the Classroom**

No computers & silence phones, please. Beverages are OK if they have tops to prevent spilling. No food. Thanks! If I am unable to make it to class, I will let you know in advance. If I have not appeared after 10 minutes, you may go.

**COLLEGE INFO:**

**Academic Honesty**

Quizzes, exams, & papers must be the student's own work. Plagiarism, i.e., copying someone else's work without giving credit, is to be avoided. Such copying—from a book, another classmate's paper, or any other source—is dishonest.

At Monmouth College we view academic dishonesty as a threat to the integrity and intellectual mission of our institution. Any breach of the academic honesty policy – either intentionally or unintentionally – will be taken seriously and may result not only in failure in the course, but in suspension or expulsion from the college. It is each student's responsibility to read, understand and comply with the general academic honesty policy at Monmouth College, as defined in the Scots Guide (<http://department.monm.edu/stuserv/student-handbook/academic.htm>) and to the specific guidelines for each course, as elaborated on the professor's syllabus.

The following areas are examples of violations of the academic honesty policy:

1. Cheating on tests, labs, etc;
2. Plagiarism, i.e., using the words, ideas, writing, or work of another without giving appropriate credit;
3. Improper collaboration between students, i.e., not doing one's own work on outside assignments unspecified as group projects by the instructor;
4. Submitting work previously submitted in another course, without previous authorization by the instructor.

(This list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

It is my policy to enforce the College's academic regulations concerning plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions on this, please see me.

**Disability Services**

Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should the Disability Services at [tlc@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:tlc@monmouthcollege.edu) in the Teaching and Learning Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Poling Hall, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. Please meet with me early in the semester to discuss the implications related to this course and bring your documentation from DS. I will work with you to make the necessary arrangements. For more information: <http://www.monmouthcollege.edu/life/disability-services>

### **Writing Center**

The MC Writing Center offers unlimited, free peer tutoring sessions for students at MC. Peer writing tutors work with writers from any major, of any writing ability, on any type of writing assignment, and at any stage of their writing processes, from planning to drafting to revising to editing. They are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Mellinger Teaching and Learning Center, open Sunday-Thursday 7-10pm and Monday-Thursday 3-5pm on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointment necessary! Learn more on the Writing Center website: <http://blogs.monm.edu/writingatmc/writing-center/>

### **College Counseling Services**

Monmouth College Counseling Services assists students in addressing personal, social, career, and study problems that can interfere with your academic progress and success. All services are free and can include individual and group counseling, crisis consultations, and wellness groups. The Counseling Center is in the lower level of Poling Hall, and you can schedule an appointment there, by calling Student Affairs at x2114, or by email [hfisher@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:hfisher@monmouthcollege.edu) or [cbeadles@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:cbeadles@monmouthcollege.edu). The website is: <http://www.monmouthcollege.edu/life/residence-life/counseling-services> In an emergency, please immediately call 911 and campus security at 309-337-5708.

### **A Personal Note**

As you start your final year at Monmouth College, please take care of yourself and your friends, and always be considerate to others. By supporting each other and looking out for one another, we can make college great for everyone.

### **Sketch of the Spring Semester:**

Mid-January: 1 page hypothesis & justification  
Late-January: abstract due  
Late February: Methods & results draft due  
March 22: Draft due (add intro, hypothesis, discussion, & conclusion, revise other sections)  
March 29: Peer draft feedback due  
April 5: Submit final conference paper  
April 12: Practice #1 presentations & feedback  
April 19: Practice #2 presentations & feedback Scholar's Day posters due  
April 26: Scholars' Day presentations  
April 22 or 29: [Illinois State](#) undergrad conference (all-day trip)  
May 4: Final version of paper due

### **Sketch of the Paper for Spring**

Title Page & Abstract	
Intro	2-3 pages
Lit Review	~8 pages
Hypothesis	2-3 pages
Methods	1-3 pages
Analysis	5-10 pages
Discussion	2-3 pages
Conclusion	1-2 pages
References	

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings are on course webpage (<http://nkalmoe.wordpress.com/senior/>)

Topic	Reading	Notable Dates
<b>Aug 25:</b> Introduction		
<b>Sept 1:</b> What is political science research? (social science overview)	<a href="#">Lupia (2013)</a> : 6 pages, social science <a href="#">Smith (2002)</a> : 2 pages, social science <a href="#">Beuachamp (2015)</a> : 10 pages, prediction <i>Babbie, Chs. 1, 4 (optional)</i>	Quiz 1
<b>Sept 8:</b> What topics should we study? What questions should we answer? (PS overview)	<a href="#">Duke PS paper overview</a> : 3 pages Other articles (TBD)	
<b>Sept 15:</b> What do we know, & how do we find it? (lit review & resources)	<b>Student Thesis #1</b>	Quiz 2 1 page: 3 ideas for topics.
<b>Sept 22:</b> What is social science theory? (types of explanations)	<b>Student Thesis #2</b> <i>Babbie, Chs. 2 (optional)</i>	1 page: 3 research questions.
<b>Sept 29:</b> What do we expect? (Hypotheses & conceptual variables)	<b>Student Thesis #3</b>	Quiz 3 List: 15 scholarly sources
<b>Oct 6:</b> How do we find out? (basic designs)	<a href="#">Druckman (2012)</a> : 2 pages, experiments <a href="#">King (1995)</a> : 8 pages, replication <a href="#">Ioannidis (2005)</a> : 5 pages, false positives <i>Babbie, Chs. 8-12 (optional)</i>	
<b>Oct 13:</b> What data is needed, & how do we find it? (operationalization & resources)	Other articles (TBD) <i>Babbie, Ch. 5 (optional)</i>	Quiz 4
<b>Oct 27:</b> Numbers: Not scary, Part I – Proportions ( <b>LAB</b> )	Other articles (TBD)	Research Plan due: question, methods, & bibliography
<b>Nov 3:</b> Numbers: Not scary, Part II – Chance ( <b>LAB</b> )	Read 3 articles on your research question	Quiz 5
<b>Nov 10:</b> Numbers: Not scary, Part III – Correlations ( <b>LAB</b> )	2 short sample articles (TBD)	1 page lit summary due
<b>Nov 17:</b> Workshop on <u>YOUR</u> methods	Read 3 articles on your research question	Quiz 6
<b>Nov 24:</b> What did we find, & what does it mean? (understanding tests & results)	Read 3 articles on your research question <i>Babbie, Ch. 13-14 (optional)</i>	You're writing your review
<b>Nov 30:</b> How do we present results with graphics? ( <b>LAB</b> )	Read 3 articles on your research question	Quiz 7 You're writing your review
<b>Dec 1:</b> How should we write up results? (tips for writing political analysis)	Read 3 articles on your research question <i>Babbie, Ch. 15 (optional)</i>	You're writing your review
<b>Dec 8:</b> How should we present results? (tips for presenting political analysis)	<a href="#">Druckman (2015)</a> : 10 pages Other articles (TBD)	Quiz 8 You're writing your review
<b>Dec 12:</b> Semester review & look ahead Saturday, Dec 12 11:30 a.m.		<b>Literature Review due</b> No exam

**Syllabus Revisions:** This syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor with written or verbal notice given in class.